The Upright Christian Discovered, &c.

Psal. 18. 23. *I was also upright before him; and I kept my self from* MINE *Iniquity.*

Mat. 26. 39. *He fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but* AS THOU WILT.

Quest. 1. WHat *Sin may be named a Man's own?*

Answ. Generally, every one that he commits, may be named *his own.* All are Off-springs of the *Lust*, that

St. *James* calleth *his own.* The *Devil* can fasten no Guilt upon us without the consent of our Wills. But yet some Sins be more peculiarly and more eminently to be called our own. Namely, *such as there is a stronger tendency in us to commit, than others; such as our Wills and Affections are more engaged unto, than unto others.*

These are of *different kinds* in the several *unregenerate* Persons; in all of whom they do reign. The *Discovery of them,* that is most level to the lowest Christians, is made by their *Causes,* and by their *Effects.*

Their *Causes* are either *Natural* or *Moral. Natural,* from the different *Temperaments of Mens Bodies* and *Connexion of their Passions.* These be the secret Springs of special *Inclinations* and *Aversions.* It is true, *corrupted Nature* includes *all* Sin. But there

there is not an equal inclination in *every* person unto *all* Sin. In waste Ground *some Weeds* be ranker than others, from the quality of the *Soil*: And in the Lives of Men, *some Sins* be more predominant than others, by reason of *peculiar Dispositions*. For *bodily Dispositions* incline the *Soul*. We see Men of *Sanguine Constitutions* are usually *light and vain, sensual and riotous, bold and aspiring*. Men of *Phlegmatick Constitutions* be *idle and slow, cold and careless* in things of moment. Men of *Melancholick ones* are *suspicious, soure*, and not *easie to be entreated, jealous*, and often *revengeful*. And *Cholerick Constitutions* of Body, make men *heady, various, violent, troublesome to themselves and others*. Moreover, vicious Affections run in several Channels, according unto the alterations made in Bodies in Mens several Ages. The *Spring* of corrupt Nature is still the *same*; but the *Course*

is different. Youth is *carnal, presumptuous, easie to be deceived*, and *refractory to Reason. Middle Age* is of *cooler Passions, covetous, ambitious*, turned unto *more solemn* and *less scandalous Follies* than those of Youth. *Old Age* has its peculiar Vices; it is *querelous, impatient, covetous, vainly fearful* of contempt or want. Now according to our *Constitutions* and *Ages*, we must make our enquiry for our Own Sin.

Our *Passions* be sensitive Cravings for *apprehended good*, or *for the removal of apprehended evil*. Now Sin being the *disorder of our desiring Faculty*, we may discover what is our predominant Sin, by considering what Affection is *most violent in us*; and of *what others it is productive*. What is it we do most love, and when disappointed of it, do most hate, such as cause the disappointment? *&c.*

The

The *Moral Causes* of special Sins are to be found *in the several Callings wherein Men are engaged.* In these Satan lays his Snares. Secondly, *In the opposite states of Prosperity and Adversity.* Both of which have their special Temptations adherent, long traines of them. Thirdly, *In the Society that we converse with.* Company that we chuse, discovers us unto others, and may discover us unto our selves. Fourthly, *In the Quality of the Times wherein we live.* There are *Days* named *Evil*, in respect of Temptations concomitant, which will require great *circumspection* to preserve our innocence. And in these, our swimming with the Streame, or resisting the Torrent, will discover much of our hearts. It was *Jehosaphat's* honour, that *he walked in the Commandments of the Lord, and not according to the doings in* Israel.

The *Effects of peculiar Sin*, by which it is made known, are now to be considered; 1. *The Sin that is frequently and easily committed, and is difficultly retracted, that Sin is a Man's own peculiar one.* Frequent Actions are from Dispositions strongly bent. And when the power of a Temptation is quick and speedy, the sinful inclination must needs be strong. Add, that it must surely be a Darling-Lust that controlls the efficacy of the Principles of Conscience concerning Good and Evil. 2. *That Lust to which others are subservient, has the supremacy in the Heart.* Sins do serve one another. *Covetousness* serves *Pride*; and *Pride* is his Sin who robs and oppresses for Money wherewith to support his State and Pomp. 3. *It is the darling Corruption that ingrosses the Thoughts.* When the Mind is in continual exercise to compass Riches, Covetousness is then the reigning Passion. 4. *The*

Sin

Sin that you desire to conceal, and are apt to defend or to extenuate, and are impatient of Reproof for it, this is your own special Sin. All Sinners dissemble, and paint their most beloved Sins with least odious Colours. Incontinent men call *Lust* a *humane Frailty.* Many Men of fair Tempers will recoil upon their Reprovers; and sometimes recriminate, that they are as bad as themselves. 5. *The Sin that enlightned Conscience reflects upon with most anguish and remorse, is usually the peculiar one.* It is commonly that by which God has been most dishonoured, that the Sinner is then most tormented with. 6. *The Sin that is your own you must seek out among the several kinds of Sin.* Is it *Omission*, or *Commission? Spiritual*, or *Carnal? Personal*, or *Relative?* &c. You must search, even where you may think there is little reason to expect it.

Q. 2. *What is it to preserve ones self from anes own Sin?*

A. It implies two things.

1. *Abstaining from the practice of that Sin.*
2. *Mortifying the inward Affection to that Sin.*

He keeps himself from it, who together abhorrs the commission of it, and watches and prays against the very inclination unto it.

Q. 3. *How appears it that a Man's so keeping himself from his own special Sin, is an undeceiving evidence of Sincerity?*

A. It appears, if we consider,

1. *God approves it.* Sincere Christians only, and accepted ones, can appeal to God. And this *David* doth; *I was upright before him.*

2. *This*

2. *This keeping ones self from ones own Sin, is equivalent to Perfection and Integrity; and it is opposite unto Guilt.* 'Tis equivalent unto Perfection, *Psal.* 37. 37. *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright, the end of that man is peace.* 'Tis opposite to Guile, *John* 1. 47. *Behold an* Israelite *indeed, in whom is no guile!*

Q. 4. *What is hence to be learned?*

A. 1. The making this our Rule to judge our selves by.

2. The keeping our selves with all diligence from our own iniquity.

Q. 5. *What Motives are unto this?*

A. These Six.

M. 1. *Habitual indulged Lusts are irreconcileable with the state of Grace.* They render us uncapable of God's *pardoning Mercy* here, and of the *heavenly*

heavenly Glory hereafter. Continued in, they do so.

M. 2. *We may by Divine Grace, subdue the strongest Lusts, that from our Nature and Temper, from Custom, or from Interests carnal, have rule over us.* The new Covenant assures Believers, that *sin shall not have dominion over them*, because they are not under the *Law* but under *Grace*, Rom. 6. 14.

M. 3. *Our subduing the ruling Lust, will make the Victory over other sins more easie.* For that is the Root whence others do spring and are fed. And besides, *one* Victory inspires with courage to atchieve *another*. The *Indians*, when they had killed *one Spaniard*, took Heart and resolved to Fight the rest. The *Romans* counted that they had killed an Host of their Enemies, in one *Mithridates*.

M. 4.

M. 4. *Our Sins cost our Saviour his Sacred Blood, to purchase their Pardon, and our freedom from their Dominion. This purely Evangelical Argument*, has an admirable Efficacy to inspire *Zeal*, and make *Sin* odious. Even the *Sin* that has been as *near* to us as our *Bosoms*; as *pleasant* as our corrupt *Inclinations*, as *familiar* and *intimate* as *Custom*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14.

M. 5. *The blessed Reward of Uprightness, comprehends all good of Time, and of Eternity.* God is graciously ready to supply all their *Wants*, allay all their *Sorrows*, overcome all their *Fears*, satisfie all their *Desires*, when his Servants are upright. And nothing but *Experience*, can make the greatness of their Reward to be understood. *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Joy for the upright in Heart*, Psal.

M. 6.

M. 6. *Woful are the Effects of indulging your peculiar Sins; the Lusts that by Pleasure or Profit bribe you. Accusing Conscience* begins *Hell* here. Sin's *memory*, in *the approaches of Death* is very ghastly. The power of God's wrath, is then more in sight. But the *prepared Plagues in the next World*, do exceed all the *most fearful Apprehensions* in this World. There is perfection of misery, *A Life in torments that never Dies, a Death that never ends.* Well then,

Q. 6. *What are the Means requisite for preserving us from our special Sins?*

A. Let it be considered, *Medicines be not Sweet-meats.* Rules for *Recovery* and *Preservation* of Health will seem *harsh*, and be *distastful* unto Minds carnal. But, if we will *keep our selves from our own Iniquity*, we must follow them.

R. 1.

R. 2. *We must be inquisitive, and get to understand, intimately and distinctly what our own Sins be.* Against *undiscerned Enemies* we cannot be provided of *Defence*; but must fall by them *without Resistance.*

R. 2. *We must use diligent Watchfulness and Circumspection, to prevent and resist our special Sins.* To wit, when we have gained the *knowledge* of them, and *sense* of our danger from them.

R. 3. *We must seriously Resolve and solemnly Engage our selves, not to yield unto our special Sins.* This we must do, with Dependance upon the PRESENT and the PERPETUAL assistance of the Divine Grace. Without which, our Resolutions *cannot be* sincere, and *will not* be effectual. But be broke by the *next tempting Objects*; as easily as the strings of a

Cobweb

Cobweb be broke by *a strong gust of Wind*; or Walls of *Glass* by the *Battery of Cannon.*

R. 4. *We must rise by speedy and deep Repentance, when we have neglected our Watch, and fallen into the Sin that we are peculiarly prone unto.* This is necessary to *recover* God's favour, and to *preserve* us for the future. Many have been cut off in early Sins, and lost their *Times*, their *Hopes*, and their *Souls* for ever. However, by continuance in Sin, the Heart grows both more UNABLE, and more UNWILLING to resist and mortifie it. Fresh Wounds are of easier Cure than inveterate Ulcers.

R. 5. *We must fervently and constantly pray for the Renewing Grace of God.* It is *by the Spirit of Holiness* that we are able to *mortifie the deeds*

deeds of the Body. And if we intermit Prayer, we must not expect the H. Spirit's aids thereunto.

R. 6. *We must act Faith in our Redeemer*. This is the Soveraign and Effectual Means. Christ is the Fountain of *Inherent* as well as of *Imputed* Righteousness. It is *through Christ strengthning we can do all things*. It is He *gives Repentance*. It is He *blesses us in turning us from our iniquities*. Mortification of Sin is attributed to his Death, in respect of *meritorious procurement*; and in respect of its being *a Representation of it*. Our *crucifying the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts* is a lively resemblance of his Death. Which was designed to be *operative* in us of the death of Sin, and to be *significative* of the same. Besides; Christ's Death mortifies Sin *by Moral Influence*. As it expresses God's *transcendant*

dent Love unto us; that *draws* us from Sin. And as it no less expresses God's *holy severity against Sin*, that *affrights and drives* us from Sin. Now, Faith in Christ both OBLIGES and ENCOURAGES us to subdue our Sins. And it has (in the word) a *cleansing Vertue*, and a *victorious efficacy*, attributed unto it. It *purifies the heart*, and it *overcomes the world*.

Concerning the great Duty of *Resignation to the disposing Will of God*, observe,

Entire Resignation to God's disposing Will is our *indispensible Duty*, under the *sharpest Afflictions*.

Q. 1. *What is consistent with this Resignation?*

A. 1.

A. 1. *Earnest Prayer* against impending Judgments, is consistent with it. Christ *Resigned* to God's will, yet *Prayed* the Cup might pass. 2. *A mournful sense* of Affliction is consistent with it. If we do not at all mourn, we despise God's Rod.

Q. 2. *What does Resignation to God's will, include in it?*

A. It includes, 1. Our *Mind's assent* to the Righteousness and Goodness of what God doth. 2. *Our Wills consent* and subjection to God's Orders, though against our own Inclinations. 3. *Our Affections composure* unto a just temper; and their restraint from sinful excesses in their *Degrees* and in their *Continuance*.

Q. 3. *What are the Arguments for this Resignation?*

A. 1.

A. 1. God has *supreme right* in our Persons, and in All we enjoy. 2. God is *Righteous in all his ways*, and will not wrong us. 3. God's *Power is uncontrolable*, and it is vain to contend with Him. 4. God's Fatherly *afflictions deserve our Love* and Thanks. 5. God's *Wisdom orders all* in the best manner *for his Glory*; which is to be preferred above all, our *Life it self*: And *for our final Good*, which is to be preferred above *present Ease*.

Q. 4. *What Directions are useful for our Resigning to God's Will?*

A. 1. Look *to Jesus Christ*, the grand Exemplar; his *Resignation* and his *Reward*. 2. Look *to Saints in all Ages*. *Jam.* 5. 10. 3. Look to *all Creatures*, how they obey God's Will. *Angels* above us; and those of rank below us, *Ravens* and *Lions*. 4. Look

to

to the glorious *excellency of the Will that are united unto God's Will.* 'Tis our highest Perfection. 5. Look to the *Felicity that is in Resignation,* It quiets our *Hearts,* it makes our *Election* sure, and our *Adoption.* 6. Look how *short your suffering Time* is: Weeping endures but for a Night. Add hereto, it concerns you,

1. To Believe stedfastly God's *Providence* and *Promises.* 2. To make *GOD the supreme Object of your Esteem and Affections.* 3. To moderate your *Valuations* and *Affections* to all things below. 4. To *forecast possible* evils as *future,* and as coming on you; and make it your Motto, *Never secure.* 5. To reflect seriously and mournfully upon *your guilt and deservings from God's Justice. In the day of Adversity consider, Godly* sorrow, lessens *Natural.* 6. To apply your Minds to consider *your Blessings* as well as

your

your *Sufferings*. 7. To Pray *frequently* and *fervently*. *Is any afflicted, let him Pray.*

That your Prayers may prevail; Pray 1. With your Eye to God's *Mercy*, and Christ's *Merit*. 2. With your Heart submissive to God's *Will* and *Wisdom*. 3. With your Haste more for *Grace*, than for *Comfort*.

FINIS.